In order to ensure the security and protection of the ancient sculptures, idols and artifacts, watch and ward staff have been deployed at centrally protected monuments and archaeological sites. The security has been further supplemented by engagement of private security guards and the State police.

Development and maintenance of cultural importance places

†742. SHRI DWIJENDRA NATH SHARMAH: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have formulated any new schemes for development and maintenance of various places of cultural importance in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise;

(c) the amount allocated to the States during the last three years by Government in this regard;

(d) whether State Governments have fully utilized the amount allocated by Centre; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) and (b) The existing Schemes are being updated from time to time. There is no new scheme under which amounts are allocated to State Governments for this purpose.

(c) to (e) Does not arise.

Smuggling of antiques

743. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the economy of Chandraketugarh, 40 kms., northwest of Kolkata in rural Bengal is booming due to highly lucrative business of smuggling priceless antiques, including ivory and gold objects and exquisite terracota art out of country;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) whether it is a fact that there has been little effort to prevent the looting of this rich archaeological site which has been going on for at least two decades now; and

(c) if so, what steps Government have proposed to take to prevent the brazen looting of the site?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (c) There were reports of illegal digging for antiquities by the villagers at Chandraketugarh and nearby villages. The Calcutta Circle of the Archaeological Survey of India has brought this to the notice of District and State Government administration to prevent such diggings and illegal trade in antiquities.

In order to ensure the security and protection of the ancient sculptures, idols and artifacts, watch and ward staff have been deployed at centrally protected monuments and archaeological sites. The security has been further supplemented by engaging of private security guards and the State police. The Government is also considering the amendment of the Antiquities and Art Treasures Act 1972 to firmly deal with illicit traffic in antiquities.

Cultural development in Uttaranchal

†744. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of schemes being implemented for different types of cultural development in Uttaranchal;

(b) whether the State Government of Uttaranchal has proposed any scheme for development of certain traditional cultural and pilgrimage routes; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and the amount released out of the funds sanctioned for different proposals?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) There is not specific scheme for Uttaranchal. Grant-in-aid is being sanctioned under various Schemes of Ministry of Culture for the

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